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MSM Aims To Revive Sugar Cane Plantations To Curb Import Reliance

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KUALA LUMPUR: MSM Malaysia Holdings Bhd (MSM) is looking to restart domestic sugar cane cultivation as part of a broader strategy to reduce its full reliance on imported raw sugar and enhance supply chain resilience.



Speaking on Bernama TV's *Bual Bisnes* programme, MSM group CEO Syed Feizal Syed Mohammad said the move is in response to growing global risks, including climate change, geopolitical tensions, and supply chain disruptions.

"MSM currently depends 100% on imported raw sugar, but we are studying the feasibility of reintroducing sugar cane agriculture in Malaysia," he said.

Potential sites for the revival include Sarawak and northern Peninsular Malaysia, both identified as suitable for large-scale plantations. Historically, MSM operated around 4,000 hectares of sugar cane fields in Chuping, Perlis, since the 1970s, though the initiative was eventually halted due to its lack of economic viability.

In addition to sugar cane, the company is exploring alternative sweeteners such as palm sugar to diversify its raw material sources. Syed Feizal noted that this would help MSM cater to evolving consumer preferences in the Asia-Pacific region.

"Sugar beet is widely used in Europe, but it doesn't suit regional taste profiles. We are evaluating options like palm sugar derived from nipah coconut, which could meet local demand even if not produced at industrial scale," he said.

The exploration of alternative sources is part of MSM's long-term vision to adapt to shifting market dynamics and ensure continuity in supply.—BERNAMA

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